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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Construction of Playground Projects in N.O. & Bogalusa Begins

(New Orleans/Bogalusa) More than 100 volunteers from correctional facilities across the country are in the greater New Orleans area this week to construct two, state-of-the-art playgrounds. The project, dubbed "Make A Smile", is organized by the National Association of Wardens and Superintendents (NAAWS) and the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation (CPOF) and aims to provide a place where children and senior citizens (anyone really) can go to be active and have fun.

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, correctional agencies across the country came to the aid of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the offenders it serves. Agencies donated food, mattresses, bottled water, clothing and a host of other necessities. They also gave money to those employees who were hardest hit by the storms. Now, they want to do something for the children in those areas.

After many site visits to the Gulf Coast, "Make A Smile" organizers chose Desire Street Park in New Orleans and the Avenue B Recreation Center in Bogalusa as project sites. A third site in Moss Point, Mississippi was also chosen. Desire Street Park was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina and has not been used since. The site in Bogalusa was chosen because of its proximity to B.B. "Sixty" Rayburn Correctional Center. The community was heavily impacted by the storm and took months to recover.

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The playgrounds cost approximately \$40,000 each to build. Staff and offenders from Rayburn Correctional Center in Angie, Louisiana did much of the site preparation in advance of this week's volunteer effort. The project is made possible through donations from numerous correctional employees and agencies that wanted to help. The Bogalusa site will also have a covered pavilion for park visitors to enjoy.

Rayburn Correctional Center and the New Orleans District Probation and Parole District Office are coordinating the lodging, feeding and transportation of the volunteers. Organizers project both playgrounds will be finished by the end of the week, weather permitting.

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